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HB 150

“State Residential Building Codes”

SPONSOR STATEMENT

A residential building code is a set of regulations that specifies the minimum standards for the construction and safety of residential buildings. Currently, only commercial properties, residential structures within municipal building jurisdictions, and residential structures subject to financing through the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) are subject to building codes. HB 150 would require the State Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development to adopt, through regulation, a nationally recognized residential building code, adjusted for Alaska’s unique environment, to help ensure that residential buildings across Alaska are safe, healthy, and sustainable for the people who live in them.

A residential building code adopted under HB 150 would specify minimum requirements for the structural design and construction of the building to withstand various loads and forces, such as wind, snow, and earthquakes. Such a code would include provisions for energy-efficient design and construction to reduce energy consumption and lower the cost of living for occupants. Furthermore, homes built to code are more likely to meet buyer expectations, increase financing and insurance options, and command higher resale values.

HB 150 would apply to new residential dwellings located outside current building department jurisdictions. Residential contractors would be required to know the code as a condition for licensure and renewal and self-certify that their work complies with the code; failure to follow the residential building code would subject a builder to liability claims in the event of an accident or injury resulting from code violations. HB 150 also allows municipal building departments and AHFC to adopt another nationally recognized residential building code that best meets their needs and does not interfere with other building codes regulated and enforced by the Alaska Labor Standards and Safety Division or by the State Fire Marshal.

I urge your support for HB 150 to protect the health and safety of Alaskans.